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Religious / Quranic Text, Translation, and Generative AI: A Comparative Analysis of Online Sources and ChatGPT

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Abstract
Artificial Intelligence is growing rapidly and influencing almost all aspects of human life and its activities. One aspect of human life that is influenced by artificial intelligence is the interpretation of religious texts, including the Holy Quran, its translation, and various traditional and modern interpretations to meet the needs of time.
It could facilitate the interface and discussion between ancient wisdom and modern technological advancements, therefore it is important to evaluate AI and its impact on religious spheres. This article will highlight the importance of generative AI tools, especially ChatGPT, and their implications for religious studies, especially for Quranic studies and other relevant aspects, as well as their analysis text and its translation for accuracy to facilitate the readers and researchers of religious studies generally and Quranic Studies especially.
It will further analyze the information available online retrieved through authentic sources through the Google search engine and the information generated through AI tools, especially ChatGPT, and examine the gaps and similarities. This comparative analysis will help the researchers on the one hand to understand the importance of generative AI tools and on the other hand, analyze its implications for Quranic studies and their translation and will pave the way for religious scholars, and IT experts to collaborate for the greater and common good to improve further and also emphasize the careful use of artificial intelligence and do further research.
Keywords: Translations of the Holy Quran, Generative AI (Artificial Intelligence), Comparison, Gaps, ChatGPT.

Introduction:

We are living in the era of machine learning, and AI (Artificial Intelligence) and are even moving a step ahead to Generative AI. What is Generative AI? Generative AI tools are developed models and algorithms that could generate new content against

the given prompt or command. Among the long list of Generative AI Tools ChatGPT[1] is one of the free versions of AI Tools.

Artificial Intelligence is growing rapidly and influencing almost all aspects of human life and its activities, religious studies, and texts are no exception. Interpretation of religious texts, including the Holy Quran, its translation, and various traditional as well as modern interpretations are challenging tasks performed by AI and have some pros and cons that researchers should know.

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into religious studies, particularly in research on the Quran, offers hopeful potential but presents unique challenges and threats. The Quran's uniqueness, complexity, and deep significance cause risks when analyzed by AI for a variety of reasons. I will highlight some common and key reasons and mistakes AI could make while researching the Holy Quran and its unique elements and different aspects of religious teachings or life as it is based on divine revelation which is a unique phenomenon.

There are several questions we need to ponder upon, out of which the important question is whether we should use it or not, keeping historical evidence and the previous human experience with IT (Information Technology Tools) and machine learning, the answer would, be yes! The other relevant question would be how one should use it as it could be used for several tasks and could communicate with its user. This question becomes even more important when it comes to Religious spheres of life.

IT (Information Technology) persons develop and design patterns and algorithms to generate new content and are not competent in religious studies, therefore, erroneous responses are generated sometimes and lead to distorted images of religion as a whole and specifically distorted translations of Arabic text and Quran.

[1] See the interface of the ChatGPT

Therefore, we can say that AI systems trained on biased data can lead to culturally and theologically insensitive interpretations in Quranic research. For instance, an AI trained on Western perspectives might misinterpret concepts rooted in Islamic theology. This could lead to a biased and twisted analysis and provoke a backlash from religious clergies. [2] By evaluating its mechanism one could realize that along with other aspects and processes, prompt engineering is too important to learn and get a deeper understanding as it could lead to the required data and format or cause errors in it.

Prompt Engineering:

Prompt engineering[3] is the meticulous process of creating tailored inputs for AI tools to ensure they produce the most effective and accurate outputs. For instance, envision an antique typewriter with a sheet of paper rolling out, displaying a brain pattern formed by the letters that have just been typed.

Therefore prompts[4] are very important to get the benefit of ChatGPT minimizing the risks associated with this whole process of getting the prepared and formatted information, article, research document, survey, presentation, poetry, etc.

Religious/Quranic Studies and AI, Pros and Cons:

Some common challenges and opportunities in Quranic Teachings are translation, text analysis, cultural sensitivity, traditional approaches, recitation, ethical implications, etc., and conversing with GPT communicates fewer or more of the same points.

AI is making Quranic education more accessible globally. AI-driven platforms offer personalized learning experiences, assist with Quranic verse memorization, and

[2] See details on given websites:
https://www.ibm.com/topics/prompt-engineering
https://www.spiceworks.com/tech/artificial-intelligence/articles/what-is-prompt-engineering/
https://www.ibm.com/topics/artificial-intelligence
https://cloud.google.com/learn/what-is-artificial-intelligence
https://www.britannica.com/technology/artificial-intelligence
https://ai.engineering.columbia.edu/ai-vs-machine-learning/
https://www.techopedia.com/definition/190/artificial-intelligence-ai
https://www.techtarget.com/searchenterpriseai/definition/AI-Artificial-Intelligence

[3] **https://www.ibm.com/topics/prompt-engineering**
https://www.spiceworks.com/tech/artificial-intelligence/articles/what-is-prompt-engineering/

[4] Prompts used to evaluate the relevance and accuracy:

- Can Chat GPT translate the Arabic text
- Can Chat GPT translate the Quranic text
- List of books on translation of the Quran
- List of books on Art of Translation
- Give biographical sketch of the prophet Muhammad PBUH
- What does ChatGPT know about prophet Muhammad PBUH
- List of books on the life of prophet Muhammad PBUH
- What does ChatGPT know about the revelation of Quran?

facilitate the teaching of Quranic Arabic, making the learning process more efficient and effective.

Considering scholars' detailed interpretations of the Quran, linguistic, theological, and contextual aspects are crucial. These interpretations help in understanding the Quran's meanings beyond the literal text. An AI system could make errors by ignoring or oversimplifying this exegetical tradition. For example, if an AI system were to analyze the Quran solely based on the text without consulting classical Tafsir, it might miss critical interpretative insights. This could lead to incorrect or incomplete conclusions, especially when dealing with complex theological issues.

AI has many applications in Quranic studies, such as digitizing and analyzing the text, as well as developing tools for teaching and understanding the Quran.

The Quran, being a sacred and complex text, poses specific risks when analyzed by AI, highlighting the need for careful consideration of how AI is utilized in religious research. Here are some of the key mistakes AI could make when researching the Quran.

AI systems may be entangled with the problem of fully grasping the range of distinctive features and characteristics of Classical Arabic, leading to literal interpretations of metaphorical language. Additionally, without understanding the historical and situational context, AI could misinterpret verses, applying them incorrectly or failing to recognize the intended message.

The use of AI in Quranic studies has the potential to impact traditional scholarship. While AI can accelerate research and make Quranic knowledge more accessible, there is a risk that reliance on technology could undermine the traditional methods of Quranic study, which emphasize deep reflection, spiritual connection, and engagement with the text. To balance the benefits of AI with the preservation of traditional scholarship, it is important to integrate AI tools into a broader framework of Quranic study that values both technological innovation and the rich heritage of Islamic learning.

AI has significantly contributed to Quranic studies by using machine learning algorithms to analyze the text. This helps identify patterns, themes, and linguistic structures not immediately apparent to human scholars and allows for comparative studies between different translations, aiding in understanding the evolution of interpretations over time and across various cultural contexts.

AI can be used in Quranic studies to train algorithms to recognize and replicate Tajwid rules for Quranic recitation. These AI systems can provide feedback on pronunciation and adherence to Tajwid rules for learners. Additionally, AI-powered tools can help preserve traditional modes of recitation for future generations.

AI systems developed from biased data may lead to culturally insensitive interpretations in Quranic research. For example, an AI trained on Western models

might misinterpret Islamic concepts like "Jihad," focusing on militaristic interpretations. This lack of understanding could also lead to presenting heretical or offensive interpretations within the Islamic tradition, undermining research validity and provoking backlash from religious communities.

The Quran contains many idiomatic expressions and figurative language. Translating them requires cultural insight, which AI systems often lack. For example, the phrase "يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ"[5] (The hand of Allah is over their hands) represents support and authority. A literal AI translation might misrepresent the theological concept by attributing physical attributes to God, which is inconsistent with Islamic teachings. It also requires authentic commentaries of the Holy Quran.

The process of translating the Quran along with commentaries using AI (artificial intelligence) encounters distinct hurdles due to the intricate nature of its language, context, and cultural nuances. Ensuring the precision of translations is of paramount importance, and a cooperative approach that leverages both AI capabilities and human expertise is crucial to addressing these challenges effectively.

By leveraging advanced AI models that accurately grasp context through the integration of contextual embeddings and attention mechanisms, involving Muslim Scholars we can significantly boost translation accuracy and incorporate commentaries and Ahadith as well.

AI has the potential to help translate the Quran, but significant challenges remain due to language, culture, and religious sensitivity. Errors can range from inaccurate meanings to misrepresentations of religious concepts. Addressing these issues requires a collaborative approach that combines AI technologies with human expertise. Future developments should focus on improving contextual understanding, reducing biases, and enhancing algorithms to respect and preserve the depth of the Quranic text, as an overall comparison reveals the following facts:

Authentic Sources Online or in-person Libraries	AI - ChatGPT
Detailed information	Generic information
Relevant data	Repetitive data and format
Deep and critical analysis outcomes	Superficial outcomes presenting the accuracy
Citations and references are accurate	Hallucinations in citation and cannot verify
Rectification – verification is possible	Erroneous information. Prompt engineering is important.

[5] Al Quran 48:10

The information we retrieve from Google Scholar and other authentic sources is deeply detailed and relevant whereas the information we get through ChatGPT is superficial, repetitive, generic, and sometimes erroneous.

Ethical Implications and Human Factors:

The use of AI in Quranic studies offers benefits but raises important ethical questions. Its integration into religious practice and scholarship must align with Islamic values and principles.

The main ethical concern is the role of humans in interpreting the Quran. The introduction of AI raises questions about the extent to which machines should be allowed to participate in the interpretation of sacred texts. Human scholars must remain at the forefront of Quranic interpretation, with AI seen as a tool that supports and enhances human scholarship rather than replacing it.

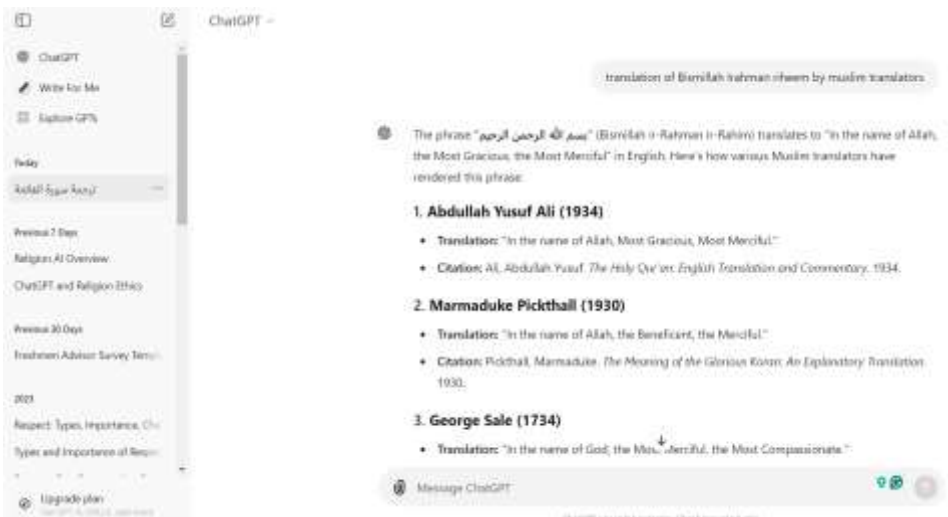
Ethical considerations regarding AI-generated interpretations of the Quran should involve Islamic scholars to ensure accuracy and alignment with Islamic teachings. Take an example of the translation of the first surah of the Holy Quran:

Examples:[6]

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ

الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ[7]

[6] Example of the prompt and outcomes:
Interface of ChatGPT:



[7] Al-Qur'an 1:1-7

alhamd lilah rabi alealamin alrahman alrahim malik yawm aldiyn ayak naebud wayak nastaein ahdina alsirat almustaqim sirat aladhin aneamat ealayhim ghayr almaghdub ealayhim wala aldaaliyn amin[8]
Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds, Most Compassionate, Most Merciful, Master of the Day of Judgment. Thee we worship and Thee we seek help. Guide us to the straight path, the path of those whom Thou hast bestowed, not of those with wrath nor of those who go astray. Amen[9]

This is a translation of the first chapter of the Quran, known as Al-Fatiha.

"All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate, Master of the Day of Judgment. You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help. Guide us on the Straight Path, the path of those who have received Your grace; not the path of those who have gone astray or incurred Your wrath. Amen."[10]

For further analysis see the given table and evaluate it carefully for better understand of gaps and similarities:

Table of Comparison and Analysis:

Surah Fatiha Translations by Muslim Translators		
Name of Translators	**Translations by Muslim translators are available online** (by using Google search engine)	**Translations by ChatGPT Prompt (**English translation of Surah Fatiha by Marmaduke Picthal and other Muslim translators to date**)**
Marmaduke Pickthall[11]	1. In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful 2. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, 3. The Beneficent, the Merciful: 4. Owner of the Day of Judgment, 5. Thee (alone) we worship; Thee alone we ask for help. 6. Show us the straight path, 7. The path of those whom Thou hast favored; Not (the path) of	1. In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. 2. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, 3. The Beneficent, the Merciful. 4. Master of the Day of Judgment, 5. Thee (alone) we worship; Thee (alone) we ask for help. 6. Show us the straight path, 7. The path of those whom Thou hast favoured; Not (the path) of those who earn Thine anger nor of

[8] The transliteration of the Quranic verse is taken from the Google Translator.
[9] Ibid
[10] Translation by ChatGPT
[11] https://www.alim.org/translation/1/

	those who earn Thine anger nor of those who go astray.	those who go astray.
Abdullah Yusuf Ali[12]	1. In the name of Allah Most Gracious Most Merciful. 2. Praise be to Allah the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds. 3. Most Gracious Most Merciful. 4. Master of the Day of Judgment. 5. Thee do we worship and Thine aid we seek. 6. Show us the straight way. 7. The way of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace Those whose (portion) is not wrath and who go not astray.	1. In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. 2. Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds; 3. Most Gracious, Most Merciful; 4. Master of the Day of Judgment. 5. Thee do we worship, and Thine aid we seek. 6. Show us the straight way, 7. The way of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace, those whose (portion) is not wrath, and who go not astray.
Muhammad Muhsin Khan (in GPT) **(Al-Hilali & Khan)**[13]	1. In the Name of Allâh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful 2. All the praises and thanks be to Allâh, the Lord of the ‘Âlamîn (mankind, jinn and all that exists) 3. The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. 4. The Only Owner (and the Only Ruling Judge) of the Day of Recompense (i.e. the Day of Resurrection) 5. You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything). 6. Guide us to the Straight Way.	1. In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. 2. All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of the 'Alamin (mankind, jinn, and all that exists). 3. The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. 4. The Only Owner (and the Only Ruling Judge) of the Day of Recompense (i.e., the Day of Resurrection). 5. You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything). 6. Guide us to the Straight Way. 7. The Way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace,

[12] Ibid (printed version of Allama Abdullah Yusuf Ali pp 14-15c, Ed. 1980) Note: when we ask this question to ChatGPT which is the best English translation of the Holy Quran? It replies without providing any evidence; Abdullah Yusuf Ali’s translation among the Muslim translators and Arberry’s among the Western translators.

[13] https://quran.com/1/

	7. The Way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your Anger (i.e. those who knew the Truth, but did not follow it) nor of those who went astray (i.e. those who did not follow the Truth out of ignorance and error).	not (the way) of those who earned Your Anger (such as the Jews), nor of those who went astray (such as the Christians).
Sahih International[14]	1. In the name of Allāh, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful. 2. [All] praise is [due] to Allāh, Lord of the worlds - 3. The Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful, 4. Sovereign of the Day of Recompense. 5. It is You we worship and You we ask for help. 6. Guide us to the straight path - 7. The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have earned [Your] anger or of those who are astray.	1. In the name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful. 2. [All] praise is [due] to Allah, Lord of the worlds – 3. The Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful, 4. Sovereign of the Day of Recompense. 5. It is You we worship and You we ask for help. 6. Guide us to the straight path – 7. The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray.
Muhammad Asad[15]	1. IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE DISPENSER OF GRACE: 2. ALL PRAISE is due to God alone, the Sustainer of all the worlds, 3. the Most Gracious, the Dispenser of Grace, 4. Lord of the Day of Judgment! 5. Thee alone do we worship; and unto Thee alone do we turn for aid.	1. In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Dispenser of Grace: 2. ALL PRAISE is due to God alone, the Sustainer of all the worlds, 3. the Most Gracious, the Dispenser of Grace, 4. Lord of the Day of Judgment! 5. Thee alone do we worship; and unto Thee alone do we turn for aid. 6. Guide us the straight way –

[14] https://www.alim.org/translation/1/
[15] ibid

	6. Guide us the straight way - 7. the way of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings, not of those who have been condemned [by Thee], nor of those who go astray!	7. the way of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings, not of those who have been condemned [by Thee], nor of those who go astray!

In the above-given translations some words, phrases, and signs are different in the translation by the Translator and ChatGPT which are highlighted in red, it is also noted that through different devices Chat GPT gives different formats, which could lead the reader or the researcher to incorrect outcomes. One can also observe that in the translation of the 7th verse of Surah Fatiha by Muhammad Mohsin Ali, ChatGPT did its translation as, "The Way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your Anger (such as the Jews), nor of those who went astray (such as the Christians)". it is inaccurate as the translator didn't mention Christians or Jews in his translation available online.

References and Citations:

It provides a variety of references or citations with the response, most of which were hallucinated and inaccurate, and when one asks GPT that the mentioned citation or reference is incorrect, the GPT apologizes and rephrases the mentioned reference or sometimes only changes the page numbers which are not reliable and can't be used by the researcher or reader. Sometimes it produces incomplete references, without the name of the publisher, or the year it was published. Sometimes it creates references of its own site page, for example; "OpenAI. (2024). Yusuf Ali translation." Such chat/communication is unauthentic, laborious to double-check, misleading, and cannot be used in research. Sometimes it gives outdated or even fake or incomplete links in the references for example, "Arberry, Arthur J. *The Koran Interpreted*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1955. Available here"

When one clicks on the link, it opens the Amazon website, where it is written "Sorry, we couldn't find that page" with an image of a dog. On that web page, one has two options, visit their home page or see the info. about the dogs that work in Amazon, but one can find the same book by directly searching on the Amazon site, which is misleading.

Furthermore, the prompt used was the same, but the response of ChatGPT varies from device to device, in some devices, it gives bullets for verses and somewhere it gives the numbering to the verses, also it gives different references, citations, or links with the response, which were mostly incorrect. One could also notice that in some places the word "God" is used instead of "Allah" by the chatGPT, though the translator used the word Allah.

ChatGPT uses a machine learning process and takes information from the previous chats as well as prompts to improve its responses and user experience which is one of the reasons behind the different responses on different devices even though the prompt was the same, which questions the authenticity and accuracy of the chat or two ways communication.

If one notices Yusuf Ali's Translation of Sura Fatiha[16] the pronoun is incorrect in the printed version and the correct translation is "Those"[17] Furthermore, if one asks ChatGPT to "write the commentary of Sura AL Fatiha by Abdullah Yusuf Ali with citation"[18] it gives a very generic overview and not the exact commentary or notes.

The following points are also important to keep in mind while using AI (ChatGPT):

- ChatGPT is not fully designed for the Arabic Tafsir of the Holy Text so far and sometimes it confuses the Tafsir with the translation, although it can communicate in the Arabic language, more precisely nearly accurately.
- One can observe that ChatGPT always uses a positive connotation, and always replies positively, which seems to be a good business strategy to increase the number of its users.
- The free version of the ChatGPT is not connected to the internet and Its dataset only extended up to 2021, so it lacks information on more recent events.[19]

Sometimes, it gives erroneous information, and incorrect data and causes hallucinations, which means one must have adequate knowledge to use the AI, especially ChatGPT.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

ChatGPT could be used in the following possible ways to perform different tasks or generate different texts or do different assignments, presentations, etc. It could be used as: 1. Assistant, 2. Collaborator, 3. Guide or Scholar to lead the task, etc.

This means researchers must be careful while using ChatGPT as there are several questions and observations on the limitations of the AI. Which are these possible ways would be the right approach to use AI- ChatGPT? In my experience, one should not be using ChatGPT especially in religious studies or in Quranic studies as it would be subservient and question human capabilities and potentials. However, it would be better to get benefits from artificial intelligence, especially by using it as an assistant or collaborator. Let's take some examples to understand it better.

[16] Allama Yousaf Ali page 14-15 (Ed. 1980)

[17] In the printed version it is incorrect but It is correct in the online translation retrieved through the Google search engine see https://quranyusufali.com/1/

[18] It is a "Prompt" that was used to generate the information.

[19] https://www.scribbr.com/frequently-asked-questions/chatgpt-information/
See details: https://help.openai.com/en/articles/8437071-data-analysis-with-chatgpt

Moving ahead, it is vitally important to find a harmonious equilibrium between utilizing the advantages of AI and upholding the spiritual and intellectual integrity that has typified Quranic scholarship throughout history.

The intersection of Artificial Intelligence and the Quran offers exciting opportunities for study and understanding. However, it also raises important ethical questions that must be carefully considered. It is essential to keep a balance between embracing the benefits of AI and maintaining the spiritual and intellectual rigor of Quranic scholarship. It is the responsibility of Scholars, Institutions, and government organizations that deal with IT and religious affairs to form the policy for the ethical use of Generative AI and to develop more accurate tools for Quranic Studies and other religious texts and spheres of life.

The future of AI in Religious/Quranic Studies will be shaped by technological advancements and the needs of the global Muslim community. AI has the potential to offer new insights into the Quran, promote cross-cultural understanding, and preserve Islamic knowledge. However, integrating AI into Quranic studies must be guided by ethics and a commitment to maintaining the Quran's true message. Embracing AI opportunities while upholding Islamic principles will help the Muslim community navigate this new technological frontier. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that Muslim Scholars of all religious spheres and IT experts to collaborate and develop more accurate models, patterns, lists of prompts, and algorithms to facilitate the readers and researchers of Islamic studies.[20]

Muslim religious scholars and teachers must educate their students about the limits of Generative AI and its careful use. It is strongly recommended to hold collaborative studies and analysis of the religious text, especially the Quranic translation by Muslim as well as Western scholars along with the Tafsir, hadith and its translations, and other Islamic texts on biographies of the holy prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to make it accessible and facilitate researchers and readers to evaluate and contribute to the knowledge for the greater and common good, otherwise, generative AI could lead to the misunderstandings and could distort the image of Islam as AI tools are developed by Western IT experts, who are not fully aware of the sacredness and Muslim needs, therefore Muslim religious scholars and IT experts should come forward and play their role effectively to secure the sacredness of the text and core teachings of the Islam, and counter the propagation against, Islam positively. such collaborations and efforts will surely lead us in the right direction and help to provide authentic information to Muslims and across the world.

[20] The First AI University (The Mohammad Bin Zaid University of Artificial Intelligence) is established in the Middle East. Muslim scholars and teachers must take an interest in it to play their role effectively to meet the needs of Muslims and other communities across the world. Some Muslim IT experts are working on it and have developed AI tools to facilitate readers and researchers of Islam.